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Boozman Bulletin: Fixing VA Healthcare

Allegations of misconduct in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system are alarming. When news of the deaths at Phoenix VA medical center broke, [I requested assurances from the VA that medical facilities Arkansas veterans use](#) maintain correct records and veterans receive medical attention in a timely manner. While the VA's response was not detailed, Acting Secretary of VA Sloan Gibson told me there is nothing to indicate a mishandling of record keeping or delays to care at our local facilities.

Those responsible need to be held accountable. That's why I led efforts calling on Attorney General Eric Holder and the [Department of Justice to join in the VA Inspector General's investigation](#) and determine if there was criminal wrongdoing. Fortunately, the FBI announced it [will open a criminal investigation](#).

Last week, the Senate, with my support, approved *The Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014*. This is an important first step to increasing accountability, improving the quality of care at VA medical facilities and proving the care of our veterans is our top priority. I [spoke on the Senate floor](#) about the need for reforms included in this bill.

Here's what's in it:

- Accountability – Provides the VA Secretary authority to fire or demote senior VA employees for poor performance
- Transparency – Electronic wait lists would be made available to veterans on the department's website so everyone can see the average waiting time for an appointment at each VA medical center for specific types of care and services. New wait time goals would also be published on the department's website and in the Federal Register within 90 days of the bill's enactment.
- Choice and flexibility – Allows veterans who have been unable to obtain care from the VA

and those who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility to seek care from private providers

•Staffing increases - Authorizes funds to hire more VA doctors and nurses to provide quality care in a timely manner

As the son of an Air Force Master Sergeant and a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I take very seriously my responsibility to represent the interests of those who have served our country in uniform and I am committed to fixing the issues plaguing VA healthcare. When it comes to our nation's veterans, their commitment to country is without question, and our country's commitment to them should be the same.

Quick Takes:

- **EPA Carbon Emissions Rule:** The EPA is targeting Arkansas for [cuts that will be stricter than 44 other states](#). The Administration needs to make every effort to get feedback from Arkansans before pursuing a regulatory policy that will cause their energy prices to skyrocket. This is why I wrote a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy [requesting a public hearing in our state](#). I also called on [President Obama to withdraw](#) this EPA crack down.
- **Protecting Arkansas's Water Resources:** The [President recently signed](#) the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA) into law. As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I helped craft this bipartisan legislation and was [pleased many of our provisions were included](#). This will improve our nation's water resources policy by reforming the Army Corps of Engineers to increase transparency, improve the reliability of water supply and hydropower and reduce flood risks.
- **D-Day:** It was my honor to recognize the members of the U.S. Armed Forces who answered the call to fight and defeat Nazi and Fascist regimes on the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. The [Senate unanimously passed the resolution I introduced](#) commemorating this important day in history.
- **July Mobile Office Schedule:** We're making it more convenient to reach us by bringing our office to you. This is a great opportunity for you to get help and to speak one-on-one with my staff about questions pertaining to the federal government. My team is traveling to [Pike and Mississippi Counties](#) and is looking forward to visiting with Arkansans to answer questions and help resolve issues with federal agencies.
- **Social Media Update:** I'm on [Instagram](#). Follow me to see what I'm doing to serve you @johnboozman. Join me next Monday at 12:30 CT on [Facebook](#) for a live

Q&A.



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